

I/WE CLAIM

1. A cooking appliance comprising:
 - a cooktop;
 - at least one heating element arranged on the cooktop, said heating element being selectively operable at multiple power levels;
 - at least one control element for establishing a desired power level for the at least one heating element; and
 - a controller linked to the at least one heating element and the at least one control element, said at least one control element being adapted to establish first and second setting schemes for the at least one heating element wherein, upon selection of the first setting scheme, the controller activates the at least one heating element at a selected power level and, upon selection of the second setting scheme, the controller activates the at least one heating element at an initial power level for a predetermined time period and then automatically reduces the initial power level to the selected power level upon termination of the predetermined time period.
2. The cooking appliance according to claim 1, wherein the at least one control element includes a plurality of consecutive numeric digits, each of said numeric digits being associated with a respective power level.
3. The cooking appliance according to claim 2, wherein the consecutive numeric digits include both even and odd numbers.
4. The cooking appliance according to claim 3, wherein the even numbers are associated with the first setting scheme such that selection of

an even numbered power level raises a temperature of the at least one heating element to a level corresponding to the selected even number.

5. The cooking appliance according to claim 3, wherein the odd numbers are associated with the second setting scheme such that selection of an odd numbered power level raises the temperature of the at least one heating element to the initial power level for the predetermined period after which the temperature of the at least one heating element automatically lowers to the power level corresponding to the odd numbered power level.

6. The cooking appliance according to claim 5, wherein the initial power level of the second setting scheme is selected through the at least one control element.

7. The cooking appliance according to claim 5, wherein the initial power level is automatically established through selection of the odd numbered power level.

8. The cooking appliance according to claim 2, further comprising: a central graphic display unit arranged on the control panel, said central display including at least one visual indicator being associated with at least the one control element.

9. The cooking appliance according to claim 8, wherein the visual indicator is an LED.

10. The cooking appliance according to claim 8, wherein the control display presents characters in an alpha-format.

11. A cooking appliance comprising:

a cooktop;

at least one heating element arranged on the cooktop, said heating element being selectively operable at multiple power levels;

at least one control element for establishing a desired power level for the at least one heating element; and

means for establishing first and second setting schemes for the at least one heating element wherein, upon selection of the first setting scheme, the at least one heating element is operated at a selected power level and, upon selection of the second setting scheme, the at least one heating element is operated at an initial power level for a predetermined time period and then is automatically reduced from the initial power level to a lower power level upon termination of the predetermined time period.

12. The cooking appliance according to claim 11, wherein said establishing means operates under one of the first and second setting schemes based on a select one of even and odd number power level settings on the at least one control element.

13. The cooking appliance according to claim 12, wherein the odd number power level settings are associated with the second setting scheme such that selection of an odd numbered power level raises the temperature of the at least one heating element to the initial power level for the predetermined period after which the temperature of the at least

one heating element automatically lowers to the power level corresponding to the selected odd numbered power level.

14. The cooking appliance according to claim 13, wherein the initial power level of the second setting scheme is selected through the at least one control element.

15. The cooking appliance according to claim 13, wherein the initial power level is automatically established through selection of the odd number power level.

16. The cooking appliance according to claim 11, wherein the lower power level is the desired power level.

17. A method of controlling operation of a cooking appliance including a cooktop having at least one heating zone and a controller regulating an operating temperature of the at least one heating zone in accordance with first and second setting schemes comprising:

selecting between first and second setting schemes for the at least one heating zone;

positioning a control element, connected to the controller, to select a desired power level corresponding to a selected one of the first and second setting schemes; and

regulating the at least one heating zone to perform a cooking operation in accordance with the selected one of the first and second setting schemes wherein, when the second setting scheme is selected, the at least one heating zone is operated at an initial power level for a

predetermined time period and thereafter automatically lowered to the desired power level.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein, when the first setting scheme is selected, the at least one heating zone is operated at a power level corresponding to the selected power level.

19. The method according to claim 17, wherein the step of positioning the control element to select a desired power level comprises:

- selecting a first power level for the at least one heating zone, said first power level being associated with the second operational setting scheme;

- selecting a second power level, said second power level being greater than the first power level; and

- returning the control element to the first power level, wherein the at least one heating zone is operated at the second power level for a first period of time, at the termination of which the at least one heating zone is operated at the first power level.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising: providing an indication on a display that the heating zone is operating at the initial power level when the cooking appliance is functioning under the second setting scheme.